



CONT_PV(2024)1111_1

MINUTES

Meeting of 11 November 2024, 15:00-18:00,
and 12 November 2024, 09:00-12:00 and 14:30-18:30

BRUSSELS

The meeting opened on Monday 11 November 2024 at 15:00, with Niclas Herbst (Chair) presiding.

The meeting opened at 15:00.

11 November 2024, 15.00 – 17.00

1. Adoption of agenda

The draft agenda was adopted in the form shown in these minutes.

2. Chair's announcements

The Chair drew the attention of Members to the information in the CONT news.

3. 2023 discharge: General budget of the EU - Commission

CONT/10/00520

2024/2019(DEC) COM(2024)0272[01] – C10-0067/2024

Rapporteur:

Niclas Herbst (PPE)

Responsible:

CONT

- Hearing on MFF Heading 2 with Commissioner Elisa Ferreira, responsible for Cohesion and Reforms, and Commissioner Niclas Schmit, responsible for Jobs and Social Rights, in the presence of ECA reporting Member Helga Berger.

Speakers: Niclas Herbst, Helga Berger (ECA Member), Elisa Ferreira (Commissioner responsible for Cohesion and Reforms), Niclas Schmit (Commissioner responsible for Jobs and Social Rights), Virginie Joron, José Cepeda, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Daniel Freund.

11 November 2024, 17.00 – 18.00

Jointly with Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)

4. ECA Special report 20/2024: Common Agricultural Policy Plans

CONT/10/01273

- Presentation of the special report, by ECA reporting member Nikolaos Milionis
- Exchange of views with invited Members from the Committees on Budgets (BUDG) and on the Environment, Public Health and on Food Safety (ENVI).

Speakers: Niclas Herbst, Nikolaos Milionis (ECA Member), Wolfgang Burtscher (Commission, DG AGRI), Dick Erixon, Carmen Crespo Díaz, Éric Sargiacomo, Jessika Van Leeuwen, Daniel Buda, Marie Walsh, Herbert Dorfmann, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Martin Häusling, Raffaele Stancanelli, Emma Wiesner, Luke Ming Flanagan.

The meeting adjourned at 17.56.

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The meeting opened at 09.05 with Niclas Herbst (Chair) presiding.

12 November 2024, 9.00 – 11.00

5. 2023 discharge: General budget of the EU - Commission

CONT/10/00520

2024/2019(DEC) COM(2024)0272[01] – C10-0067/2024

Rapporteur:

Niclas Herbst (PPE)

Responsible:

CONT

- Hearing on MFF Heading 3 with Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski, responsible for Agriculture and Commissioner Wopke Hoekstra, responsible for Climate Action, in the presence of ECA reporting member Klaus-Heiner Lehne.

Speakers: Niclas Herbst, Joëlle Elvinger (ECA Member), Janusz Wojciechowski (Commissioner responsible for Agriculture), Kurt Vanderberghe (Commission, DG CLIMA), José Cepeda, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Grzegorz Braun.

The meeting adjourned at 10.27 and resumed at 11.05

12. November 2024, 11.00 – 12.00

6. ECA Special report 13/2024: Absorption of funds from the Recovery and Resilience Facility

CONT/10/01274

- Presentation of the special report by reporting ECA Member Ivana Maletić

Speakers: Niclas Herbst, Ivana Maletić (ECA Member), Geraldine Mahieu (Commission, DG ECFIN), Dirk Gotink, Carla Tavares, Julien Sanchez, Dick Erixon.

The meeting adjourned at 12.15 and resumed at 14.35.

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Change of meeting room to SPINELLI (1G-3)

12 November 2024, 14.30 – 16.30

7. 2023 discharge: General budget of the EU - Commission

CONT/10/00520

2024/2019(DEC) COM(2024)0272[01] – C10-0067/2024

Rapporteur:

Niclas Herbst (PPE)

Responsible:

CONT

- Hearing on the RRF with Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis, responsible for an Economy that Works for People, and Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni, responsible for Economy, in the presence of ECA reporting Member Jan Gregor.

Speakers: Niclas Herbst, Jan Gregor (ECA Member), Valdis Dombrovskis (Commissioner responsible for an Economy that Works for People), Paolo Gentiloni (Commissioner responsible for Economy), Ivana Maletić (ECA Member), José Cepeda, Dick Erixon, Daniel Freund, Tomáš Zdechovský, Dirk Gotink (on behalf of Monika Hohlmeier).

12 November 2024, 16.30 – 18.30

8. Discharge 2023: EU general budget - Discharge to Other Institutions

CONT/10/01269

- Exchange of views with the Secretary Generals and Directors of the following Other Institutions and Bodies, in the presence of ECA reporting Member Jan Gregor:

Speakers: Niclas Herbst, Jan Gregor (ECA Member), Kristel Siitam-Nyir (EPPO), Agostino Valerio Placco (CJEU), Zacharias Kolia (ECA), Tomáš Zdechovský, Dick Erixon, Joachim Brudziński (also on behalf of Cristian Terheş), Csaba Molnar, Caterina Chinnici, Milan Jaron (EPPO), Belén Huerta Rico (CJEU), Isabelle Le Galo Flores (EESC), Petr Blížkovský (CoR), Marie-Pierre Darchy (European Ombudsman), Leonardo Cervera Navas (EDPS), Kinga Kollár.

9. Any other business

10. Date of next meeting

21 November 2024 (Brussels)

4-5 December 2024 (Brussels)

9 December 2024 (Brussels)

The meeting ended at 18.36

**ПРИСЪСТВЕН ЛИСТ/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/
ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE NIMEKIRI/KATAΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/
LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/POPIS NAZOČNIH/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REĢISTRŠ/DALYVIŲ SAŖAŠAS/
JELENLÉTI ÍV/REGĪSTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŠCI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/
LISTĂ DE PREZENȚĂ/PREZENČNÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM NAVZOČIH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/NÄRVAROLISTA**

<p>Бюро/Mesa/Předsednictvo/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Predsjedništvo/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/ Biuras/Elnökség/Prezydium/Birou/Predsednictvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)</p>
<p>Niclas Herbst (P), Caterina Chinnici (VP1).</p>
<p>Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Βουλευτές/Members/Députés/Zastupnici/Deputati/Deputāti/ Nariai/Képviselek/Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter</p>
<p>Georgios Aftias (1), Joachim Stanislaw Brudziński (1), José Cepeda (2), Caterina Chinnici (1), Dick Erixon (2), Daniel Freund (2), Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (1), Monika Hohlmeier (1), Virginie Joron (1), Alexander Jungbluth (1), Kinga Kollár (1), Giuseppe Lupo (2), JMarit Maij (1), Csaba Molnár (1), Jacek Protas (1), Julien Sanchez (2), Jonas Sjöstedt (1), Carla Tavares (2), Tomáš Zdechovský (1).</p>
<p>Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Zamjenici/ Supplenti/Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantysnariai/Pötagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanți/Náhradníci/ Namestniki/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter</p>
<p>Grzegorz Braun (1), Dirk Gotink (2), Eero Heinäluoma (1), Bert-Jan Ruissen (2).</p>

<p>216 (7)</p>
<p>222 (3)</p>
<p>Herbert Dorfmann, Carmen Crespo Díaz, Éric Sargiacomo, Jessika Van Leeuwen, Daniel Buda, Marie Walsh, Martin Häusling, Raffaele Stancanelli, Emma Wiesner, Luke Ming Flanagan.</p>
<p>57 (8) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/ Päevakorra punkt/Σημείο της ημερήσιας διάταξης/Agenda item/Point OJ/Τοčka dnevnoĝ reda/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkēs punktas/Napirendi pont/Punt Agenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Punkt på föredragningslistan)</p>
<p></p>

По покана на председателя/Por invitación del presidente/Na pozvání předsedy/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair/Sur l'invitation du président/ Na poziv predsjednika/Su invito del presidente/Pēc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/ Fuq stedina tač-'Chairman'/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/La invitația președintelui/ Na pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nōukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Vijeće/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/ Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)

Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Kommissionen/Kommission/Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Komisija/Commissione/Bizottság/ Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisia/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)

Elisa Ferreira, Niclas Schmit, Janusz Wojciechowski, Wopke Hoekstra, Wolfgang Burtscher, Kurt Vanderberghe, Geraldine Mahieu, Valdis Dombrovskis, Paolo Gentiloni.

Други институции и органи/Otras instituciones y organismos/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner og organer/Andere Organe und Einrichtungen/Muud institutsioonid ja organid/Λοιπά θεσμικά όργανα και οργανισμοί/Other institutions and bodies/Autres institutions et organes/Druge institucije i tijela/Altre istituzioni e altri organi/Citas iestādes un struktūras/Kitos institucijos ir įstaigos/ Más intézmények és szervek/Istituzzjonijiet u korpi oħra/Andere instellingen en organen/Inne instytucje i organy/Outras instituições e outros órgãos/Alte instituții și organe/Iné inštitúcie a orgány/Muut toimielimet ja elimet/Andra institutioner och organ

ECA	Helga Berger, Klaus-Heiner Lehne, Nikolaos Milionis, Ivana Maletić, Joëlle Elvinger, Jan Gregor, Zacharias Kolia.
EPPO	Kristel Siitam-Nyir, Milan Jaron.
CJEU	Valerio Placco, Belén Huerta Rico.
EESC	Isabelle Le Galo Flores.
CoR	Petr Blížkovský.
European Ombudsman	Marie-Pierre Darchy.
EDPS	Leonardo Cervera Navas.

Секретариат на политическите групи/Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppenes sekretariat/ Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktsioonide sekretariaat/Γραμματεία των Πολιτικών Ομάδων/Sekretariats of political groups/Secrétariat des groupes politiques/Тайніштва клубова zastupnika/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politisko grupu sekretariāts/Frakciju sekretoriai/ Képviselőcsoportok titkársága/Segretarjat gruppi politiçi/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Sekretariado dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupin/Sekretariat političnih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristö/ De politiska grupernas sekretariat	
PPE S&D PflE ECR Renew Verts/ALE The Left ESN NI	

Кабинет на председателя/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinet des Präsidenten/Presidendi kantslei/Γραφείο του Προέδρου/President's Office/Cabinet du Président/Ured predsednika/Gabinetto del Presidente/Priekšsēdētāja kabinets/Pirmininko kabinetas/Elnöki hivatal/Kabinett tal-President/Kabinet van de Voorzitter/Gabinet Przewodniczącego/Gabinete do Presidente/Cabinet Președinte/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli	
Кабинет на генералния секретар/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/ Kabinett des Generalsekretärs/Peasekretäri büroo/Γραφείο του Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du secrétaire général/Ured glavnog tajnika/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Generalsekretära kabinets/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/ Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinett tas-Segretarju Ġenerali/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Cabinet Secretar General/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urad generalnega sekretarja/Pääsihteerin kabinetti/ Generalsekreterarens kansli	
Генерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/ Directorate-General/Direction générale/Glavna uprava/Direzione generale/Generāldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/ Direktorat Ġenerali/Direktoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat	
DG PRES DG IPOL DG EXPO DG EPRS DG COMM DG PART DG PERS DG INLO DG TRAD DG LINC DG FINS DG ITEC DG SAFE Legal Service	M. Strasser (Director for Budgetary Affairs)

- * (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chair/Président/Predsjednik/Priekšsēdētājs/
Pirmininkas/Elnök/Chairman/Voorzitter/Przewodniczący/Preşedinte/Predseda/Predsednik/Puheenjohtaja/Ordförande
- (VP) = Заместник-председател/Vicepresidente/Místopředseda/Næstformand/Stellvertretender Vorsitzender/Aseesimees/Αντιπρόεδρος/
Vice-Chair/Potpredsjednik/Vice-Président/Potpredsjednik/Priekšsēdētāja vietnieks/Pirmininko pavaduotojas/Alelnök/ Víci
'Chairman'/Ondervoorzitter/Wiceprzewodniczący/Vice-Presidente/Vicepreşedinte/Podpredseda/Podpredsednik/
Varapuheenjohtaja/Vice ordförande
- (M) = Член/Miembro/Člen/Medlem/Mitglied/Parlamendiliige/Βουλευτής/Member/Membre/Član/Membro/Deputāts/Narys/Képviselő/
Membru/Lid/Członek/Membro/Membru/Člen/Poslanec/Jäsen/Ledamot
- (F) = Длъжностно лице/Funcionario/Úředník/Tjenestemand/Beamter/Ametnik/Υπάλληλος/Official/Fonctionnaire/Dužnosnik/
Funzionario/Ierēdnis/Pareigūnas/Tisztviselő/Ufficjal/Ambtenaar/UrządNIK/Funcionário/Funcionar/Úradník/Úradnik/Virkamies/
Tjänsteman

NEWSLETTER

COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2024, 15:00 – 18:00

TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2024, 9:00 – 12:00

BRUSSELS, SPAAK (1A002)

TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2024, 14:30 – 18:30

BRUSSELS, SPINELLI (1G-3)

Monday, 11 November 2024, 15:00 – 17:00

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair draws attention to the following points:

Interpretation was requested in the following languages:

DE, EN, FR, IT, NL, EL, ES, PT, FI, SV, CS, HU, PL, SK, BG, RO

The meeting will be webstreamed and can be followed live via the [CONT webpage](#).

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Monday, 11 November 2024, 15:00 – 17:00

4. 2023 DISCHARGE: GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EU – EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Hearing on MFF Heading 2 with Commissioner [Elisa Ferreira](#), responsible for Cohesion and Reforms, and Commissioner [Niclas Schmit](#), responsible for Jobs and Social Rights, in the presence of ECA reporting Member [Helga Berger](#)

CONT/10/00520

[2024/2019\(DEC\)](#)



Rapporteur: [Niclas Herbst](#) (EPP)

Shadow Rapporteurs: [José Cepeda](#) (S&D), [Tamás Deutsch](#) (Pfe), [Joachim Stanisław Brudziński](#) (ECR), [Olivier Chastel](#) (Renew), [Daniel Freund](#) (Greens/EFA), [Pasquale Tridico](#) (The Left)

Administrators: Kaare Barslev, Benoît Lefort, Hans Stander, Anna Zsoldos

The CONT Committee will hold a hearing with Commissioners Ferreira and Schmit, both responsible for the implementation of the largest part of cohesion policy. Reporting Member of the European Court of Auditors Helga Berger will represent the Court and present the main findings of the Annual Report 2023 regarding MFF Heading 2 – ‘Cohesion, resilience and values’.

In 2023, as in 2022, the rules governing the funds available for cohesion policy in the 2014-2020 programming period were made more flexible to allow the funds to be used in response to the COVID-19 crisis and as emergency support for refugees fleeing Russia’s aggression in Ukraine.

Expenditure under MFF Heading 2 amounted to EUR 73.3 billion in 2023, equivalent to 38.4 % of expenditure under the EU budget. The largest share of this expenditure came from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with a value of EUR 35 billion or 47.8 % of expenditure under the heading, followed by the European Social Fund (ESF) with EUR 18.9 billion or 25.8 %, and the Cohesion Fund (CF) with EUR 9.8 billion or 13 %.

The Court of Auditors has found a high error rate for the funds spent under MFF Heading 2 for 2023 – 9.3 % – which can in large part be attributed to the more flexible spending to address crises. At the same time, the Court signals that the error rate has also been pushed up by the increased implementation of the funds, with the end of the programming period 2014-2020, and the simultaneous implementation of funds under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), which put additional pressure on scarce administrative resources in the Member States.

The Court has repeatedly warned that expenditure under this heading is at a high risk of errors, mainly due to the complexity of rules. Errors detected by the Court are caused by support for ineligible projects (29 % of cases, mainly related to the ERDF and CF), and reimbursement of ineligible costs (26 %, with a relatively higher share under the ESF, Youth Employment Initiative and European Aid to the Most Deprived).

The Court also points out that the audit and control system used in cohesion, with distinct responsibilities for Member State authorities and the European Commission, has vulnerabilities, since the Court continues to detect errors in projects that have been audited before by the Member States’ audit authorities, which makes it harder for the Commission to rely on the assurance given by these authorities.

The weaknesses identified by the Court have been addressed through recommendations to the Commission. The Commission has accepted these recommendations.

The draft report is available on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable

Event	Body	Date
Deadline for Opinion-giving Committees	FEMM, DEVE, CULT, AFET, PECH, AGRI, ENVI, EMPL, ITRE, JURI, LIBE, TRAN, REGI	28 February 2025
Consideration in Committee	CONT	17-18 February 2025
Deadline for Amendments	CONT	21 February 2025, 12:00
Vote in Committee	CONT	7-8 April 2025
Vote	Plenary	May 2025

Monday, 11 November 2024, 17:00 – 18:00

5. ECA SPECIAL REPORT 20/2024: COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY PLANS

CONT/10/01273

Presentation of the special report by ECA reporting Member, [Nikolaos Milionis](#); Exchange of views with invited Members from the Committees on Agriculture (AGRI), on Budgets (BUDG) and on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)

Administrator: Marius Cobianu

The Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), making up to almost one third (EUR 378.5 million) of the 2021-2027 EU budget, has gone through several reforms over the years to help agriculture in the EU meet new challenges such as climate change and the sustainable use of natural resources.

The latest CAP reform was adopted on 2 December 2021 and entered into force on 1 January 2023, comprising the CAP Strategic Plan Regulation, the Horizontal Regulation on the financing, management and monitoring of the CAP and the Common Market Organisation Regulation.

The CAP reform introduced a series of general, specific and cross-cutting objectives, a new 'green architecture' based on voluntary and mandatory measures to attain those objectives, as well as a monitoring framework, based on a set of common output, result and impact indicators, to measure performance through monitoring, reporting and evaluation. To support the implementation of the CAP, each EU country drew up its own CAP Strategic Plan, which, together with their amendments, were assessed and approved by the European Commission in the second half of 2022.

In its Special Report 20/2024, the Court assessed whether the national CAP plans provide a sound basis for meeting an ambition – regarding the environmental and climate-related objectives of the 2023-2027 CAP – that is greater than in the previous period. In particular, the Court checked whether those objectives were reflected in the new 'green architecture' defined in the CAP Strategic Plan Regulation, in the Commission's assessment of the draft plans, subsequent changes to those plans and the approved plans, and in the recent EU measures taken up to April 2024 in response to farmers' requests.



The scope of the audit covered the plans of four Member States (Ireland, Spain, France and Poland), interviews with 66 farmers visited in 14 Member States as part of the ECA's 2023 statement of assurance audit, and reviews of the relevant work of the Commission and of evaluations and studies by several stakeholders (farming organisations, researchers and non-governmental environment organisations).

According to the Court, the plans actually implemented by the Member States contribute little to a further greening of the CAP and are not well aligned with the European Green Deal's goals and targets, and key elements for assessing CAP green performance are missing.

To alleviate this situation, the Court recommends that the Commission (1) promote the exchange of 'green' good practices in the strategic plans; (2) estimate the CAP contribution to the Green Deal's targets, and (3) strengthen the future (post-2027) CAP monitoring framework for the climate and the environment.

Tuesday, 12 November 2024, 09:00 – 11:00

6. 2023 DISCHARGE: GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EU – COMMISSION

CONT/10/00520
[2024/2019\(DEC\)](#)

Hearing on MFF Heading 3 with Commissioner [Janusz Wojciechowski](#), responsible for Agriculture, and Commissioner [Wopke Hoekstra](#), responsible for Climate Action, in the presence of ECA reporting Member [Klaus-Heiner Lehne](#)



Rapporteur: [Niclas Herbst](#) (EPP)

Shadow Rapporteurs: [José Cepeda](#) (S&D), [Tamás Deutsch](#) (P/E), [Joachim Stanisław Brudziński](#) (ECR), [Olivier Chastel](#) (Renew), [Daniel Freund](#) (Greens), [Pasquale Tridico](#) (The Left)

Administrators: Kaare Barslev, Benoît Lefort, Hans Stander, Anna Zsoldos

The CONT Committee will hold a hearing with Commissioners Wojciechowski and Hoekstra on the implementation of the expenditure under Heading 3 of the MFF – ‘Natural Resources and environment’, and the implementation of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and EU environmental and climate policies. Reporting Member of the European Court of Auditors Klaus Heiner Lehne will represent the Court and present the main findings of the Annual Report 2023 regarding the related MFF

heading.

Expenditure under MFF Heading 3 amounted to EUR 59.5 billion in 2023, equivalent to 31.1 % of expenditure from the EU budget. The largest share of this expenditure are direct payments to farmers under the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF), with a value of EUR 38.6 billion or 65 % of expenditure under the heading, followed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) with EUR 16.4 billion or 27.6 %. A relatively modest amount of EUR 0.5 billion was spent through the LIFE programme for Environment and Climate. In this field, implementation of EU policy objectives is mainly pursued through mainstreaming of environmental and climate objectives in other financial instruments (such as the agricultural funds and cohesion funds) and through imposing legal obligations on Member States and society at large.

The Court of Auditors has found an error rate of 2.2 % for the expenditure under this heading, which is slightly above the materiality threshold of 2 %. The Court categorises most expenditure under this heading as ‘low risk’, since the implementation mechanism for, in particular, direct payments is very effective and characterised by a low number of errors. For the EAFRD this is different, as that fund is implemented in a way that is more error prone.

From 2023, the Commission has made (a limited number of) payments under the ‘new’, performance-based 2023-2027 CAP. Under the 2023-2027 CAP, payments are made on the basis of the achievement of objectives laid down in Strategic Plans agreed between each Member State and the Commission. Because of the limited number of performance-based payments in 2023, there is no information yet from the Court on how these payments should be seen in terms of risk of error.

Tuesday, 12 November 2024, 11:00 – 12:00

7. ECA SPECIAL REPORT 13/2024: ABSORPTION OF FUNDS FROM THE RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FACILITY

CONT/10/01274

Presentation of the special report by ECA reporting Member *Ivana Maletić*

Administrator: Benoît Lefort

According to this ECA report, the first three years of the EU's EUR 724 billion Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) have seen delays in funds being disbursed and projects being implemented. This put at risk the achievement of goals to help EU countries recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and make them more resilient. Even though the rate of payments from the Commission is progressing, Member States might not be able to draw down or absorb the funds in time, complete their planned measures before the RRF expires in August 2026, and thus gain the expected economic and social benefits.



Almost all countries experienced delays in submitting payment requests to the Commission, often because of inflation or supply shortages, uncertainty about environmental rules, and insufficient administrative capacity. By the end of 2023, they had submitted 70 % of their planned requests, and for around 16 % less money than expected.

On a positive note, pre-financing of up to 13 % of the amount the Member States could receive allowed more funds to be paid out quickly at the start, which was in line with the goal of responding to the crisis.

However, the Court is critical of the pace at which the bulk of the funds have been drawn down since. By the end of 2023, only EUR 213 billion had been transferred from the Commission to national coffers. These funds have not necessarily reached final recipients. In fact, almost half of the RRF funds disbursed to the 15 Member States that provided the necessary information had not yet reached final recipients.

Tuesday, 12 November 2024, 14:30 - 16:30

8. 2023 DISCHARGE: GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EU – COMMISSION

CONT/10/00520
[2024/2019\(DEC\)](#)

Hearing on the RRF with Commissioner *Valdis Dombrovskis*, responsible for An Economy that Works for People, and Commissioner *Paolo Gentiloni*, responsible for Economy, in the presence of ECA reporting Member *Jan Gregor*



Rapporteur: [Niclas Herbst](#) (EPP)

Shadow Rapporteurs: **José Cepeda** (S&D), **Tamás Deutsch** (Pfe), **Joachim Stanisław Brudziński** (ECR), **Olivier Chastel** (Renew), **Daniel Freund** (Greens/EFA), **Pasquale Tridico** (The Left)

Administrators: Benoît Lefort, Kaare Barslev, Hans Stander, Anna Zsoldos

The key event in 2023 was the revision of the 27 Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs) and their assessment by the Commission. Increased energy prices, high inflation and supply chain disruptions caused by Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, and, in some cases, natural disasters, made it challenging for Member States to implement certain reforms and investments in their RRFs.

The Commission reported that the implementation of the RRF was 'on track' as of end-2023. The revision of the plans had an impact on the pace of implementation of the existing plans. Still, implementation on the ground continued to progress throughout 2023, with the number of payment requests submitted by the end of 2023 doubling from 27 to 54 and with the achievement of most milestones and targets in line with initial expectations.

In 2023, the Commission disbursed a total of EUR 75 billion (out of which EUR 28.7 billion was in loans) and additional pre-financing payments of EUR 7.1 billion. This brought the total disbursements by the end of 2023 to EUR 220.8 billion, divided into EUR 141.6 billion in grants (40 % of the total EUR 357 billion for grants under the RRF envelope) and EUR 79.2 billion in loans (27 % of the total EUR 291 billion for loans under the RRF envelope).

In 2023, the Commission also continued to bring clarifications to the way the design of the facility is interpreted through (1) a framework for assessing the satisfactory fulfilment of the milestones and targets upon conducting the assessment, published in February 2023; (2) a methodology to determine the amount to be suspended if a milestone or target is not satisfactorily fulfilled; (3) a framework for the application of the provision related to the reversal of milestones and targets under the facility; and (4) updated 'Guidance on RRFs' following the ECOFIN Council Conclusions of April 2024 on the facility's mid-term evaluation.

Based on its ex post audits on milestones and targets, the Commission found no evidence that the audited milestones and targets were not satisfactorily fulfilled.

Written questions were submitted to the Commission on the implementation of the RRF in preparation for the hearing, answers to which were received and shared with CONT Members on 7 November 2024.

All the relevant documents can be found on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable

Event	Body	Date
Deadline for Opinion-giving Committees	FEMM, DEVE, CULT, AFET, PECH, AGRI, ENVI, EMPL, ITRE, JURI, LIBE, TRAN, REGI	28 February 2025
Consideration in Committee	CONT	17-18 February 2025
Deadline for Amendments	CONT	21 February 2025, 12:00
Vote in Committee	CONT	7-8 April 2025
Vote	Plenary	May 2025

Tuesday, 12 November 2024, 16:30 - 18:30

9. DISCHARGE 2023: EU GENERAL BUDGET – OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Exchange of views with the Secretaries-General and Directors of the following Other Institutions and Bodies, in the presence of ECA reporting Member [Jan Gregor](#): Council and European Council; Court of Justice of the EU; European Court of Auditors; European Economic and Social Committee; European Committee of the Regions; European Ombudsman; European Data Protection Supervisor; European Public Prosecutor's Office

Rapporteurs:

ECR: [Joachim Stanisław Brudziński](#) (Council, EEAS, EESC, CoR, Ombudsman, EDPS) [Dick Erixon](#) (ECA) [Cristian Terheş](#) (CJEU)

EPP: [Tomáš Zdechovský](#) (EPPO)

Shadow Rapporteurs:

EPP: **Andrey Kovatchev** (Council, EEAS), **Catarina Chinnici** (CJEU, ECA, EESC, CoR), **Kinga Kollár** (EDPS, Ombudsman)

S&D: **Csaba Molnár**

PfE: **Virginie Joron**

Renew: **Michał Wiezik** (CoR, EESC), **Gilles Boyer** (EPPO, CJEU), **Vlad Voiculescu** (EEAS, EDPS, Ombudsman), **Olivier Chastel** (ECA), **Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy** (Council)

Greens: **Damian Boeselager**

The Left: **Pasquale Tridico**

Administrators: Christelle Courtade, Diego Rasetti, Marius Cobianu

The Other Institutions invited to the hearing of 12 November are the following:

- Council and European Council
- Court of Justice of the EU
- European Court of Auditors
- European Economic and Social Committee
- European Committee of the Regions
- European Ombudsman
- European Data Protection Supervisor

- European Public Prosecutor's Office

The hearing of the European External Action Service is scheduled for 21 November 2024.

Not only the European Commission, but all EU institutions (including the Parliament itself) and other agencies, bodies and joint undertakings, are subject to the process of parliamentary scrutiny of the implementation of their budget. The aim is to ensure compliance with the relevant legal and regulatory framework requirements, and verify its use in accordance with the principle of sound financial management, namely with the principles of 'economy', 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness'.

The EU institutions enjoy administrative autonomy in accordance with Articles 316 and 335 of the TFEU and they are individually responsible for the implementation of their budgets in accordance with Article 59 of the Financial Regulation. The Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee takes a decision on discharge to the other institutions and bodies on the basis of Rule 102 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure. In addition, Article 269 of the Financial Regulation provides that the legal bases for the Commission's discharge apply to EEAS mutatis mutandis.



For the discharge 2023, like in previous years, the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) is integrated into the discharge procedure for the other institutions. The budgetary discharge is granted to the EPPO Administrative Director in accordance with Article 94(10) of the Council Regulation implementing enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the EPPO.

The discharge hearing is based on the questions related to the 2023 discharge that were proposed by CONT Members and sent to

the respective institutions by the Rapporteur on 20 September 2023. The Q&A catalogue was forwarded to CONT Members on 7 October.

The questionnaires are focused on performance, internal controls, accountability and ethics, human resources and working conditions, resources and procurement. Moreover, attention continues to be paid to digitalisation and environmental sustainability.

The budget of all nine other institutions represented 20.39% of the MFF's Heading 7 – 'European Public Administration' for 2023 (which amounted to EUR 12.3 billion). The reporting ECA Member, Jan Gregor, will inform the Committee about the Court's findings on a budget that is mostly administrative and, as was the case for the previous discharge year, estimated at low risk.

Besides the ECA Annual Report, the following documents are of particular relevance for the hearing on the 2023 discharge:

- The 2023 Annual Reports of the different Other Institutions,
- The related Annual Accounts, and
- The Q&A catalogue.

All the relevant documents can be found on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable

Event	Body	Date
Consideration of draft report	CONT	27-28 January 2025
Deadline for amendments	CONT	4 February 2025, 14:00
Vote	CONT	17-18 March 2025
Vote	Plenary	May 2025

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 21 November 2024 (Brussels)
- 4-5 December 2024 (Brussels)
- 9 December 2024 (Brussels)

PAPERLESS PROGRAMME (INTERNAL USERS ONLY)

Access CONT Committee meeting documents on [eMeeting](#) or any CONT Committee information on [eCommittee](#).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact the [CONT Secretariat](#) or visit the [website](#) of the CONT Committee.

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[July 2024 update](#)

Briefing [“Analysis of the 100 largest recipients of RRF funds per Member State”](#)

Briefing [“EU assistance to Ukraine and scrutiny of the EU financing provided”](#)

Study [“Lessons learned from the implementation of crisis response tools at EU level”](#) (Part 1)

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Briefing [“Nominations for Members of the European Court of Auditors: Denmark, Spain and Ireland”](#)

Study [“Transparency and accountability of EU funding for NGOs active in EU policy areas within EU territory”](#)

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Briefing [Mainstreaming in the post-2027 MFF](#)

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Briefing [“The European Parliament and the CFSP Budget - The case of the Rapid Deployment Capacity”](#)

Study [“Performance framework for the EU budget - Concepts and practices”](#) (Part 1)

Study [“The impacts of recent inflation developments on the EU finances”](#) (Part 1)

Briefing [“ITER financing by the EU budget - state-of-play”](#)

Briefing [“An estimate of the European Union's long-term borrowing cost bill”](#)

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At a Glance [“Options for a stronger and more agile EU budget”](#)
Study [“Options for a stronger and more agile EU budget”](#)
Briefing [“Ukraine: Financing of reconstruction and the role of the EU budget”](#)
Briefing [“Budgetary aspects of EU defence policy”](#)
In-Depth Analysis [“Recovery and Resilience Dialogue with the European Commission”](#)
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Briefing [“Human and Financial Resources in Decentralised EU Agencies”](#)
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Briefing [“Financial impact of the war in Ukraine: current and future challenges for the EU budget”](#)

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

BUDG

Study “The impacts of recent inflation developments on the EU finances” (Part 2)
Study “Performance framework for the EU budget” (Part 2)
Study “Mapping the current structure and discovering the potential of ‘other revenue’ ”
Study “Adapting the EU budget to make it fit for purpose for future enlargements”
Study “Contingent liabilities for the EU budget: an updated appraisal”

CONT

Study “The Financial Transparency System - How to improve its functioning and reliability”
Study “Lessons learned from the implementation of crisis response tools at EU level” (Part 2)
Study “Performance based Instruments: possible improvements in their design”
Study “Methods in the European Court of Auditors and the Commission: the estimated level of error vs estimated risk at payment/risk at closure”

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

BUDG

Workshop [“Some key themes for the post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework”](#)
(7 November 2024)

CONT

Workshop “EU anti-fraud architecture - the role of EU-level players, how they cooperate and the challenges they face” (date tbc)

Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs - poldep-budg@ep.europa.eu

Policy Department Webpage: <https://poldepnet.in.ep.europa.eu/home/budgetary-affairs/presentation-of-poldep-d.html>

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